



Parashat Vayishlach 5770

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## On the Parashah Molding our National Character [Tal Chermon p. 80]

During Yaakov's struggle with the angel, Yaakov's hip was dislocated, and based on this, it is forbidden to eat this displaced sinew, i.e. the sciatic nerve and its branches (Bereshit 32:35). Strange! Because once upon a time Yaakov's thigh was dislocated, we are forbidden to eat this part of the animal for all generation? Are the mitzvot milestones of our family's medical history?

The obligation to observe mitzvot began when we were commanded at Mt. Sinai through Moshe Rabbenu and not from the days of our Forefathers. [This fact has halachic implications, whether a person who eats the sciatic nerve of a non-kosher animal has violated one or two prohibitions (Chullin 100b-101b).] "It was taught at Sinai but written 'in its place,' i.e. it was mentioned in conjunction with the historical event to indicate the reason for the subsequent prohibition (Chullin 7:6). The Gemara proves this fact from the verse that states, "therefore the Children of Israel and not the Children of Yaakov refrain from eating the sciatic nerve" (Bereshit 32:32). We were only called "the Children of Israel" beginning at Sinai. The Rambam in his commentary on the Mishnah (ibid.) wrote: "Take note of a fundamental principle which is contained in this mishnah which states that: 'it [the sciatic nerve] was forbidden to be eaten from Sinai onwards.' This proves that all the prohibitions from which we refrain and all the commands which we observe are kept because G-d commanded us through Moshe Rabbenu at Mt. Sinai, and not on account of a Divine command to any earlier prophet....So we refrain from eating the sciatic nerve not because it was prohibited from the time of Yaakov Avinu, but because we were so commanded through Moshe Rabbenu."

It is true that we learn the mitzvot from Moshe Rabbenu, but we received our character traits from the Forefathers (Pirkei Avot 5:23). Our National traits come

from our Forefathers. Hashem chose us from all the nations. What this means is that He created us as a special Nation with the qualities needed for us to perform our historic task. "I have formed this Nation for Myself so they might declare My praise" (Yeshayahu 43:21). These qualities, however, were only potential and needed to be actualized through national historical events. This process began with Avraham, who is described as one of Hashem's five special possessions which, each in its own way, advance the goals of Creation (Pirkei Avot 6:9). It continued through Yitzchak, Yaakov and finally in the iron furnace of Egypt where the molding of the Jewish national character was completed. The Torah given on Mt. Sinai explicitly revealed the hidden character that existed in the Jewish soul which has its source in our Forefathers.

## Rav Aviner on... Zionism - New or Old? [Sefer Al Diglo #32]

The definition of Zionism is not that we should make aliyah and establish settlements. This was done before the appearance of Zionism, and Jews throughout all generations, from all streams and from all paths, sacrificed their lives for this purpose. Zionism is not individuals who connect themselves to the Land of Israel. The definition of Zionism is the Nation returning to its Land, cleaving to its Land, awaking from the slumber of long exile and yearning for a National life. Zionism is a state and an army, sovereignty and a government. This Zionism returned in our days as in previous days before the Exile, as in the time of the Kingship of David.

## Stories of Rabbenu –

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

### The Chasidic Movement

A Chasidic Rabbi wanted to influence a young student to become part of the Chasidic movement. The student came to speak with our Rabbi, who dedicated eight personal discussions to him, the conclusion of which is that one should learn Chasidic books, but not become a Chasid. This is on account of four reasons:

1. Torah takes precedence over prayer, and in the Chasidic movement there is a tendency to reverse the proper order.
2. They teach the secrets of Torah in public even to one who is not worthy.
3. Spiritual leaders must be Torah scholars, and it is impossible – for example – for the young son of a Chasidic Rebbe to be transformed easily into the Rebbe, and subsequently ask an elderly Torah scholar who comes to be blessed by him: What about your fear of heaven? [This statement is based on an incident of the writer Micha Yosef Berdichevsky. He learned at the Volozhin Yeshiva with Maran Ha-Rav Kook, and Maran Ha-Rav had doubts whether his

outward religious appearance were matched by his inner religious conviction. When he asked about it, Berdichevesky answered that in his youth, he accompanied his grandfather, who was a Torah scholar, to a young Chasidic Rebbe, who asked his grandfather in Yiddish about his level of fear of heaven.]

4. There are different types of joy. There is one kind of joy based upon purity and holiness, and another which derives from "frolicking" and drinking a "L'Chaim".

### From Rav Aviner's Commentary on Birkat Ha-Mazon, entitled Shir Ha-Ma'alot

On the Sheva Berachot –

"Let the loving couple be very happy, just as You made Your creation happy in the Garden of Eden."

From where do we know that Adam and Chava were happy in the Garden of Eden on their wedding? There is no explicit verse. They explain in yeshivot that there is no need for a verse, since it is logical. Why do I need a verse? It is a logical deduction! There was only one woman in the world, there was therefore no possibility of comparing, and the first man and woman were thus extremely happy. From the moment that a man is married, he should not look at another woman, think about another woman, compare with another woman, and then he will be joyous.

The truth is that one should act this way even before the marriage. It once happened that it was the custom in a particular place for the groom to give his bride a gift after the Chuppah. One groom did not give anything, because he was terribly poor, and he saved a small amount to pay for the wedding. The bride's friends asked her where her gift was and they mocked her, the bride turned to her groom in tears: where is my gift? He responded to her: my gift is that you are the first woman in my life, the first woman that I look at and think about, talk with and laugh with, whom I love and dream about. Do not consider this a cheap gift. It was very costly for me, it was all the days of my youth. I am not sorry. This is my gift.

Why does the sixth of the 'sheva brachot' end with "Who makes the groom and bride happy" as opposed to the wording in the final blessing: "Who make the groom happy together with the bride"? Rashi explained that in our blessing, we give thanks to Hashem who causes the rejoicing of the groom and the bride, each of them on their own, that He will not withhold any good from them. But in the next blessing, we give thanks to Hashem "'Who created a wedding, joining of a man together with a woman with happiness and delight,' as a result it ends 'Who makes the groom happy together with the bride' which means the happiness of a man together with a woman" (Ketubot 8a).

"Who created joy and happiness"

In the final blessing of the sheva brachot, there are ten expressions of happiness listed: 1. Sason - joy. 2. Simchah - happiness. 3. Gilah - rejoicing. 4. Rinah - jubilation. 5. Ditzah – pleasure. 6. Chedvah - delight. 7. Ahavah - love. 8. Achavah – fraternity. 9. Shalom - peace. 10. Rei'ut - friendship.

Our Rabbis already stated that "simchah - happiness" is referred to by ten names: Gilah - rejoicing, rinah – jubilation, sisa - joy, alisa (with a samech) - joy, aliza (with a zayen) - joy, petzichah – joyful, tzahalah - rejoicing, chedvah - delight, ha-rei'ah – friendship or ditzah - pleasure (Pesikta Kama #2 on Yeshayahu 54:1). We are surely a joyful Nation: the Torah causes joy (Tehillim 19:9); "the commands of Hashem are upright making the heart rejoice;" the mitzvot cause joy, and the Master of the Universe is happy through us (Tehillim 104:31); "Hashem will rejoice in his actions."

## *Family Matters*

*Ha-Rav writes weekly for the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships*

Go to a Marriage Counselor

Question: My husband refuses to come with me to a marriage counselor. He claims that he does not have a problem; but that I do and I should go alone. And even when he admits that he has a problem, he claims that he can solve it by himself and he doesn't need any counselors. I therefore back down since there is no benefit for me to go alone.

Answer: Do not give in, since you are suffering, as is he...and the kids. Children who grow up with tension between their parents never reach a normal state. If you want to suffer, you are mistaken. The outside world is filled with difficulties, but marriage is designed to be a quiet and pleasant haven of refuge. There is also no reason for the children to suffer. You should therefore go to the marriage counselor alone for three reasons: 1. In order to strengthen yourself so that you do not begin to think that you alone are to blame. 2. In order that you react properly during the tension, and to protect yourself and your children. 3. Perhaps the counselor will succeed in getting him to come. Giving in is a wonderful trait, but not here.

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